

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, May 31, with transcript

1869?

May 31st. My dear Aleck,

Your anxiously expected letter has at length arrived. It was foolish of you to raise our curiosity and expectation— without satisfying it, and wrong to allow half a week to elapse afterwards without giving us a notion of the mystery. It is well we did not build a very high structure on the importance of the great news, or we should have been more tantalized than we were. Two nights ago— I dreamt you were at home— and that I said “Aleck, what is your astonishing news? ”You lifted your upper lip and showed me that all your “teeth were gone! ! Curious this— since” the News” really does relate to the grinding of food, and the grinders.

Your project may turn out a good one, but don't be sanguine. The only way to avoid being overcome by disappointment, is not to expect anything till you have it in your hand. Don't allow yourself to be excited about it. We hope all may turn out as you wish. With regard to the means of operation, which you tell us to guess at, I can only suppose the wheat is washed in some chemical which cracks the skin (when dry)— and causes it to rub off by friction. Papa shakes his head at my notion— but says nothing as yet as to his own. If the Hertman's do bring anything out of yours, I hope they will be just, because it is not always the inventor who reaps the benefit. The man who possesses money to carry a scheme into effect, generally sweeps off the returns. So remember my maxim and don't build too high.

2

I suppose it has been this invention which has caused you to neglect Papa's books. I have, in almost every letter, told you of their non-delivery, and you should not have rested under any “supposition”, but have gone yourself to Bell's and MacFarlane's and have

Library of Congress

found out the cause of delay. Had it been anything connected with your own discovery, I think you would not have anything but have ascertained in person.

Papa has been pretty annoyed as well as inconvenienced by the unreasonable delay. Even now he has only received one copy. I hardly expected Uncle to look favorably on the emigration scheme, and if he prefers to stand still rather than step out, of course we can say nothing against his decision. Possibly if we should go, and be settled there, he might alter his mind and follow. He is however mistaken as regards grandma— she really would go, if all went, nor did she require much persuasion. She is constitutionally so strong that I should have no fear of her standing it. She eats three or four times as much breakfast as I do, and lunch besides— when I seldom take anything beyond a mere bite. From this I judge she would not easily break down. I do not see why you should not be able to carry out your own plans as well there as here. Why must you be in this country? If the lady would marry you at all, she would marry you anywhere, when you are ready. If she does not love you well enough to go to the end of the world with you if necessary, you would be, in my opinion, better without her. I think however she is the very one who would like to go abroad.

3

Melly told me they were all going home on Saturday— therefore I direct a note for him to Charlotte St. as he may be home today. If not however, you can either re-post or take it to him.

Remainder of letter lost.